



## "Kozak-2 plan" or recognition of Transnistria?

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"I have come to the conclusion that politics are a too serious matter to be left to the politicians."

By Charles de Gaulle

The agenda of Russian President Dmitri Medvedev for August 26 was pretty busy. On that day, the Russian chief of state informed the world community that it has signed the decree recognising the Republic of South Ossetia (RSO) and the Republic of Abkhazia. Of course, that day was a new reference point of relations around the world. The western community has started looking for levers of influence on Russia, but it ascertained that a monopole organisation of the world is absent indeed.

By coincidence, Mr. Medvedev met Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin on August 25. After the meeting, the latter "was content with the result of talks with Dmitri Medvedev, assuring that the Transnistrian problem was the focus of the meeting with the Russian president."

According to the official press release, "the chief of state has noticed a special interest of Dmitri Medvedev towards the draft law on status of the Transnistrian autonomy worked out on the basis of the law on key principles of the special legal status of localities from the left bank of the Dniester, which was voted through a political consensus on July 22, 2005.

The resolution of the Transnistrian conflict shall be based on the unanimous decision of the Moldovan political class – the Parliament of the country, the president stated. He noted that "the Russian Federation does not raise important objections against the draft law concerned."

At the same time, Russia's position was clearly presented in the media, which published statements by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. It published diametrically opposite statements! According to Lavrov, the parties in the Transnistrian settlement are ready to reconsider the Kozak Plan released in 2003 and resolve the remaining problems. "Now almost all parties in the conflict are persuaded of the necessity to reconsider the same principles which were so close to become agreements in 2003" (Sergei Lavrov was quoted as saying). It means that Moscow will not consider possibilities which unfit the Kozak Plan.

Otherwise, such different interpretations have become common and predictable. In Moscow or other Russian localities the Moldovan side demonstrates pro-Russia visions while meeting representatives of the Russian elite. On the other hand, Moldovan personalities become pro-European while visiting European countries. Unfortunately this is the reality, and the Moldovan establishment has never been outstanding as a leader in the negotiation process, it has never looked for real solutions, demonstrating some manoeuvres but being actually nobody among the strong, changing positions or having several viewpoints at the same time. The Moldovan establishment, which is expecting "happiness from the West" in this century, has done a little to approach the West. Given all these facts, the Moldovan expert community, which is in touch with the governance one or another way, is involuntarily and often reproducing the certitude and certainty of the latter, but regretfully this certainty is not based on facts but rather on gossip from "the top". There is an impression that the absolute majority of Moldovan expert community usually reacts accordingly to the rule: "it is better to give a comfortable interpretation to developments and come closer to their just interpretation than to appreciate them objec-

<sup>1</sup> Governing and Democracy in Moldova, e-journal, year VI, issue 124, 1–15 September 2008

tively." Majority of experts assured that Russia will never recognise Ossetia and Abkhazia and gave wonderful arguments, reducing them indeed to international legal norms, which important international players gave up long ago and irreversibly. By the way, what international legal norms are for? The norm is an issue relating to an agreement only. That means that when one agrees in a big or small measure, it will consider something effective and this will really become effective (the least for those reaching the agreement concerned). Indeed, the Russian leadership has demonstrated this fact.

Talks about the fact that great powers are acting like gangsters, Russia has acted by following the dictum "punish one to square many" are ceaseless. But why not to admit that the U.S., NATO actions target at a precise algorithm and they are extremely predictable (but neither the E.U., nor the NATO think that this predictability is something negative)? The perseverant is the winner. Thus, by taking such actions, the Russian diplomacy followed and will follow eventual predictability of steps.

Little will experience any emotions and will enjoy the diplomatic actions by the Russian Federation. But in such a situation, Russia does not need any longer like in the 1990s to take the U.S. advice into consideration. Political alliances are consolidated the most by noise of military shoes. The alliance of the Russian Federation with the new "friends from Caucasus" will be lasting. Now, let's speak about "friends from Caucasus". Let's recall that Transnistria, RSO and Abkhazia have built the "Commonwealth for the Rights of Nations" and the Interparliamentary Assembly on parliamentary dimension. Abkhazia and South Ossetia have opened representations in Tiraspol and Transnistria has representations in Sukhumi and Tzhinval.

Transnistria has activated its contacts with the "friends from Caucasus" after the recognition of RSO and Abkhazia, saying that they have the same rights. Both Ossetia and Abkhazia agree, but they would not dare to establish diplomatic relations with Transnistria without the consent of the "elder friend", that means Moscow. Thus, Moscow has got one more lever to press Chisinau. In other terms, Russia could not recognise the Transnistrian region, but "new independent states where the majority of population is Russian would do it, why not? Of course, if the Russian president would give green light...

Here one more interesting moment. On August 26, on the day when the independence was recognised, Igor Smirnov met Dmitri Medvedev. The meeting took place right after talks with Voronin, immediately after the Moldovan president has reported his meeting with his Russian counterpart.

One more fact is worth to be mentioned. On August 21, during the meeting with Traian Basescu, Vladimir Voronin said that the military denouement of the conflict in South Ossetia was suggestive for Moldova, or there is a frozen conflict in its territory, too. Also, he called for a "restructuring of peacekeeping forces in countries facing frozen conflicts." That means in democratic terms that international forces shall replace the Russian peacekeepers.

What international forces were envisaged? Is this NATO, OSCE, EU or the U.N? But it is well-known that none of these organisations has real premises and takes any actions to set up a peacekeeping contingent.

Developments in the Russian Federation have halted the plans of the United States, which tended to promote slowly but cogently its role in the negotiation process and its participation in the life of the Transnistrian region via projects, programmes, contacts, etc.

There is one more important thing. If Chisinau did not experience this "hot August", nobody would have had reminded Transnistria as a serious issue and all would have been limited to routine reactions or there are more important problems in the virtue of the forthcoming electoral race. Majority of members of the Chisinau Government did not visit Transnistria, which is part of the Republic of Moldova, according to international treaties and agreements. I think that this majority will not want to visit this region in the near future. But the August developments have overthrown everything and negotiations with Moscow will be necessary, and some decisions will be required, that means some things shall be accepted. But why Moscow? What about other players? They have their worries. Ukraine faces a permanent war against those from the political Olympus. What about new players? What about the EU, for example? But what did the EU propose in essence? What anything else beyond the immutability of the "5+2" negotiation format repeated every year? Did anybody support the least some ephemeral allusions about alleged European aspirations of Transnistria? No. What for? It seems that the EU did not decide yet how to get involved in the settlement process.

Indeed, do the new players know well what they really want in this conflict?

An answer to the question how the Transnistrian issue will develop and how this problem will be settled will not be long-awaited. Or, developments are too fast.

But what to do, there are new times and a new world.